

Luke Slattery - "Reclaiming Epicurus' Ancient Wisdom" and Video

Post by "SamJ" of March 30, 2020 at 11:50 PM

I've just come across this book, haven't bought it yet but couldn't find it mentioned in the search:

Reclaiming Epicurus Ancient wisdom that could save the world.

By Luke Slattery only 51 pages, **ASIN:** B00AJ3DMTO

Post by "Cassius" of March 31, 2020 at 5:59 AM

I don't think i have seen mention of the book, but Luke Slattery's video comes up regularly:

<https://www.lukeslatteryauthor.com/epicurus>

I have not seen him as having lots of promise due to comments like this:

Epicureanism was the world's first 'green' philosophy. When people turn to the ancient therapeutic philosophies, or arts of life, they tend to look to resolve Stoicism for success. But Epicureanism, which insists that we learn to be happy with less, is a better fit with the anxieties du jour.

The reason Epicureanism is not often mentioned in this context is that for more than two thousand years it has been misunderstood. Today Epicureanism is regarded as a form of gastronomic connoisseurship. In antiquity it was the exact opposite.

It should be remembered, however, that the philosophy of Epicurus is very old, and despite its contemporary resonance, is now and then rather strange. For example, believing in the absolute authority of the senses. Epicurus considered the sun no bigger than an orange because it seemed that size to the naked eye. Even in the domain of ethics, where Epicureanism is at its most attractive, its various dictates mix the reasonable – "There are three motives to injurious acts among men – hatred, envy and contempt; and these the wise man will overcome with reason" – with the hedonist: "The wise man will not make fine speeches... Nor will he dribble when drunk." On the other hand, it is remarkable just how directly the Epicurean ideal speaks to many contemporary needs. In antiquity this ideal was distilled to a quatrain of spare yet beautiful phrases:

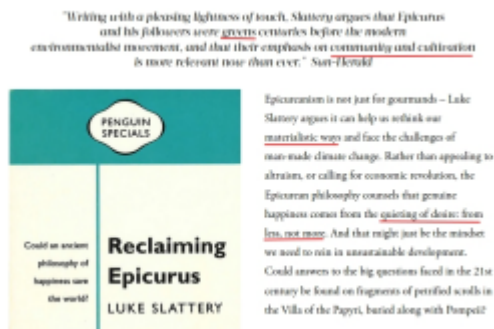
The video is professionally done but as I was listening to it in the background I pick up things like "...withdrew into his garden...."

So I personally don't recommend this video, but commentary on it is definitely worthwhile for pointing out the issues, so that people who come across it can more easily see the issues.

Given how often Luke Slattery comes up I have moved these comments to a special thread under modern works.

Post by "Cassius" of March 31, 2020 at 8:12 AM

I also smiled sarcastically when I saw this clip:



Of course, Slattery means "materialist" in an entirely different way than did Epicurus -but Epicurus is nothing if not a "materialist!"

People like Slattery in this work reduce "materialism" to "commercialism" and act as if it's just impossible for them to avoid buying those shiny trinkets in the window, and THAT is the major issue of the modern world. Geesh.

But understanding Epicurus really doesn't matter for someone whose goals are essentially political ("green" in this case) and aimed at "quieting desire" -- which is pure Buddhism.

There are many books out there like this, which start with a preferred social/political viewpoint, and try to enlist Epicurus in aid of their own conclusions. This is not a helpful approach - at all. Catherine Wilson does some of this too, but at least she spends much more time explaining the details of the philosophy, and I always get the impression, at least in watching her videos, that she knows she is over the line and is even somewhat embarrassed because she realizes that she isn't REALLY following Epicurus.